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## EPA Triggers Release of Mine Waste Into Animas River

*Posted August 07, 2015, 12:37 P.M. ET*

By [Tripp Baltz](#)

The Environmental Protection Agency accidentally triggered a 1-million-gallon release of toxic mine waste into a tributary of the Animas River in southwest Colorado, sending an orange-tinted pulse of contaminated water, sediment and metals down the river.

An EPA and Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety team “unexpectedly” caused the spill Aug. 5 while working to investigate and remediate contamination at the Gold King Mine near the upper portions of Cement Creek in San Juan County, the EPA said in a statement. No workers were harmed.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has notified water users downstream of the release so they can turn off intakes and take other steps as the contaminated water passes.

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